DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 367 836 CE 065 894

TITLE	The Recognition of Prior Learning. Quality Assurance in Education and Training.
INSTITUTION	New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Wellington.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-908927-40-1
PUB DATE	93
NOTE	36p.
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Standards; Accreditation (Institutions); *Certification; *Credits; *Educational Policy; *Equivalency Tests; Foreign Countries; Postsecondary Education; *Prior Learning; Program Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS	*New Zealand

ABSTRACT

As this booklet describes, New Zealand's Education Amendment Act of 1990 made the country's Qualifications Authority (QA) responsible for developing and implementing a process for recognition of prior learning (RPL) that would enable individuals to receive formal recognition for skills and knowledge they already possess. As of 1993, the QA had initiated a contract for the development of unit standards for persons administering/implementing RPL and unit standards to assist candidates in preparing for the RPL assessment process. The booklet provides practical information on the RPL assessment process and identifies the relevant requirements of the QA for its implementation. The following information is presented: the development and purposes of the RPL process, principles underlying the RPL process, potential candidates for RPL, providers and assessors permitted to award credit for unit standards, extension of provider accreditation to implement RPL and National Standards Body accreditation to register RPL assessors, and procedures for moderation of RPL assessment. Appended are the following: a model of good practice in implementing the RPL process, personal profiles of eight individuals who have applied for credit for their prior learning, the QA policy on RPL, a glossary, and an annotated bibliography of 19 selected publications related to RPL. (MN)

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Quality Assurance in Education and Training

The Recognition of Prior Learning

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NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
Mana Tohu Matauranga o Aotearoa

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The New Zealand Qualifications Authority promotes improvement in the quality of education and training in New Zealand through the development and maintenance of a comprehensive, accessible and flexible National Qualifications Framework.

The Authority's main functions are to:

- co-ordinate all qualifications in post-compulsory education and training so they have a purpose and relationship to one another that the public and students can understand;
- oversee the setting of and regularly review standards as they relate to qualifications;
- ensure that New Zealand qualifications are recognised overseas and that overseas qualifications are recognised in New Zealand;
- administer national examinations, both secondary and tertiary.

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PARTNERSHIP

The Qualifications Authority recognises that integral to its operations, both internal and external, is the need to be responsive to the aspirations, needs and concerns of the Maori people. The following will therefore be taken into account when implementing the principles and processes contained in this document:

- *honouring the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi through exercising the Authority's power of government reasonably and in good faith, so that the Maori interests specified in the Treaty are actively protected;*

- *eliminating the gaps which exist in relation to the educational, personal, social, cultural and economic well-being of Maori people, and which do not result from individual or cultural preferences;*

- *providing opportunities for Maori people to develop economic activities as a sound base for realising their aspirations, to promote their self-sufficiency and to eliminate attitudes of dependency;*

- *providing for Maori language and culture to receive an equitable allocation of resources and a fair opportunity to develop, having regard to the contribution made by Maori language and culture towards the development of a unique New Zealand identity.*

Responsiveness is an issue of equal importance both to the Maori people and other New Zealanders. The Qualifications Authority will operate in a way which ensures that responsiveness is part of everyday operations.

Ko nga pae tawhiti whaia kia t
Ko nga pae tata whakamaua ki
Tihei Mauriora

FURTHER INFORMATION

Other quality assurance processes carried out by the Qualifications Authority including the accreditation of National Standards Bodies to register assessors, a guide for National Standards Bodies, and accreditation, are detailed in other publications.

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October 1993

1 INTRODUCTION

This booklet offers providers[1] and National Standards Bodies[2] practical information on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and identifies the relevant requirements of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority for its implementation. It may also be of interest to private and professional associations, community organisations, employers, consulting groups and individuals.

Although the term Recognition of Prior Learning is relatively new in New Zealand, the practice is not. For many years, the acknowledgment of previously acquired skills, knowledge, attitudes and values has been common in the workplace, in educational institutions, in the community and on marae.

The Education Amendment Act 1990 called for the Qualifications Authority to be responsible for recognising "competency already achieved"[3], or RPL, in a new National Qualifications Framework. Formal credit through RPL has the potential for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of New Zealand's resources by eliminating the need for repetition in individuals' training and education. The Qualifications Authority is committed to RPL as "...a process that enables people of all ages, backgrounds and attitudes to receive formal recognition for skills and knowledge they already possess".[4]

To be compatible with and supportive of the educational reforms taking place in New Zealand, the definition of RPL adopted by the Qualifications Authority is:

> **"A process of awarding credit for unit standards in the National Qualifications Framework where the outcomes have been achieved outside the Framework".**

For an individual, this "process" involves:

- selecting the specific unit standards for which credit is desired;
- identifying and matching current skills, knowledge, attitudes and values relevant to the selected unit standards;
- being assessed;
- receiving credit for all, some or none of the selected unit standards.

1 *The term* **provider** *refers to schools, polytechnics, colleges of education, wananga, private and government training establishments, and universities.*

2 *The use of National Standards Bodies throughout includes Industry Training Organisations, NZQA advisory groups and whakaruruhau. Refer to Glossary for further definitions.*

3 *The Education Amendment Act 1990, Section 253(1)(c)(ii).*

4 *Simosko, 1991.*

RPL should not be confused with cross-crediting and transfer of credit. Transition procedures from the current qualification system to the National Qualifications Framework will be clarified for those already holding qualifications.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

The Authority has initiated a contract for the development of unit standards for RPL. These will cover standards for assessors, facilitators, managers and staff. Unit standards are also being written to assist candidates in preparing for the RPL assessment process. In 1993-94, the Qualifications Authority will develop resources and facilitate training for a limited number of individuals who will become the nucleus of an informal RPL training network for New Zealand.

2 PRINCIPLES

1 RPL should be accessible to anyone with skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that can be validated.

2 Access to RPL should be supported through a process of referral to those accredited to implement RPL.

3 Opportunities for candidates to receive support and guidance should be available throughout the RPL process.

4 RPL procedures ensure that assessment is fair, valid and consistent.

5 Credit for unit standards should be awarded for current and relevant skills, knowledge, attitudes and values achieved without regard to length, place or method of learning.

3 THE CANDIDATE

RPL may be considered by anyone who wants to gain formal credit for their current skills, knowledge, attitudes and values, regardless of where or how they were acquired, or how long it took. For example, prior learning can be acquired from:

- the workplace
- life experience
- activities on the marae
- hobbies and talents
- self-directed study
- non-certificated study
- formal uncertificated learning
- in-service training
- distance education or open learning
- community-based education
- overseas education, training or experience

RPL is not limited to those participating or intending to participate in education or training programmes. It may be considered by any individual with prior learning who:

- has a desire or need to have their skills, knowledge, attitudes and values formally recognised;
- has not had access to formal training and education;
- has been unable to take advantage of formal training and education;
- has been unsuccessful in formal training or education;
- is employed, self-employed or unemployed;
- wishes to explore a change in career;
- has trained or received certification overseas and wants to work towards a New Zealand national qualification.

RPL helps to generate positive attitudes about lifelong learning and the value of candidates' achievements.

4 CREDIT FOR UNIT STANDARDS

Credit can only be awarded by:

a. providers, for National Qualifications Framework unit standards they are accredited to deliver; or

b. assessors registered by National Standards Bodies for National Qualifications Framework unit standards the NSB has endorsed.

Credit can be awarded for unit standards regardless of how it will subsequently be used. For example, it may be applied to a national qualification or useful at some point in the future for making decisions about a career, or further education or training.

Where an RPL assessor is satisfied that a candidate has completed the outcomes of one or more unit standards, the credit is reported to the Qualifications Authority by the provider or NSB and added to the individual's Record of Learning.[5] A national qualification can be awarded where the individual has been assessed against, and has completed, the performance criteria of all the required unit standards.

Where an RPL candidate meets some but not all of the criteria of a unit standard, this should be documented by the assessor. However, credit can only be recorded on the Record of Learning when *all* required criteria of a unit standard are met.

5 *The Record of Learning is a record maintained by the Qualifications Authority through a database that contains the unit standards and qualifications completed by individuals.*

5 ACCREDITATION

Credit can be awarded through RPL by providers and National Standards Bodies, but it is not compulsory for either to implement a system for recognising prior learning. However, all providers and NSBs must recognise the principles for RPL set out on page 6. This will be demonstrated through a written policy statement at the time of accreditation.

Where accreditation has been extended to include the implementation of RPL, the quality management system of the accredited NSB or provider will encompass RPL procedures. The Qualifications Authority or its delegated agents will evaluate and audit quality management systems to ensure fair, consistent and valid assessment.

EXTENSION OF PROVIDER ACCREDITATION TO IMPLEMENT RPL

Providers can award credit only for unit standards they are accredited to deliver.[6] They may apply to have their accreditation extended to include the implementation of RPL by submitting supporting documentation in accordance with the guidelines in this booklet. Accreditation for RPL will be considered where applications address:

a RPL services and resources available to candidates;

b criteria and processes which will be used for selecting qualified RPL assessors;

c current and future provision of staff training for RPL;

d the RPL decision-making process (e.g. assessor recommendation to a review and award committee);

e the appeal process;

f how RPL assessment will be integrated into the moderation options specified by the National Standards Bodies;

g information on record-keeping procedures to document applications, assessments, decisions and appeals; and

h procedures to be used for evaluation and revision of RPL implementation.

6 *For further information refer to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority booklets* Guidelines and Criteria for Accreditation to Offer National Certificates and National Diplomas *and* The Approval and Accreditation of Degrees and Related Qualifications.

All RPL assessors will:

- have skills, knowledge and experience specific to the content area(s) they will be assessing;
- have knowledge, experience and demonstrated competence in RPL assessment or have available expert guidance in RPL; and
- have personal qualities necessary to undertake the assessment activities.[7]

The criteria will include any additional skills, knowledge and experience specified by the provider.

EXTENSION OF NATIONAL STANDARDS BODY ACCREDITATION TO REGISTER RPL ASSESSORS

National Standards Bodies wishing to register assessors will need to be accredited to do so. They will develop policies and procedures in accordance with these guidelines and criteria and others published by the Qualifications Authority.[8] Credit can be awarded only for unit standards the National Standards Body has endorsed.

National Standards Bodies may apply to have their accreditation extended to register RPL assessors by submitting supporting documentation. This will be considered where applications address:

a RPL services and resources available to candidates;

b criteria and processes which will be used for selecting qualified RPL assessors;

c current and future provision of training for those offering RPL services;

d the RPL decision-making process (e.g assessor recommendation to a review and award committee);

e the appeal process;

f how RPL assessment will be integrated into the moderation options specified for the relevant unit standards;

g information on record-keeping procedures to document applications, assessments, decisions and appeals; and

h procedures to be used for evaluation and revision of RPL implementation.

7 *For further information refer to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority booklet,* Guidelines and Criteria for the Accreditation of National Standards Bodies to Register Assessors.

8 *For further information refer to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority booklet,* Guidelines and Criteria for the Accreditation of National Standards Bodies to Register Assessors.

All RPL assessors registered by NSBs will:

- have skills, knowledge and experience specific to the content area(s) they will be assessing;
- have knowledge, experience and demonstrated competence in assessment and RPL assessment; and
- have personal qualities necessary to undertake the assessment activities.[9]

The criteria will include any additional skills, knowledge and experience specified by the NSB.

9 *For further information refer to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority booklet,* Guidelines and Criteria for the Accreditation of National Standards Bodies to Register Assessors.

6 MODERATION

All assessments of individuals against the outcomes of unit standards are required to be fair, valid and consistent. The actual *methods* of assessment are at the discretion of the assessor, but must be consistent with the specified performance criteria.

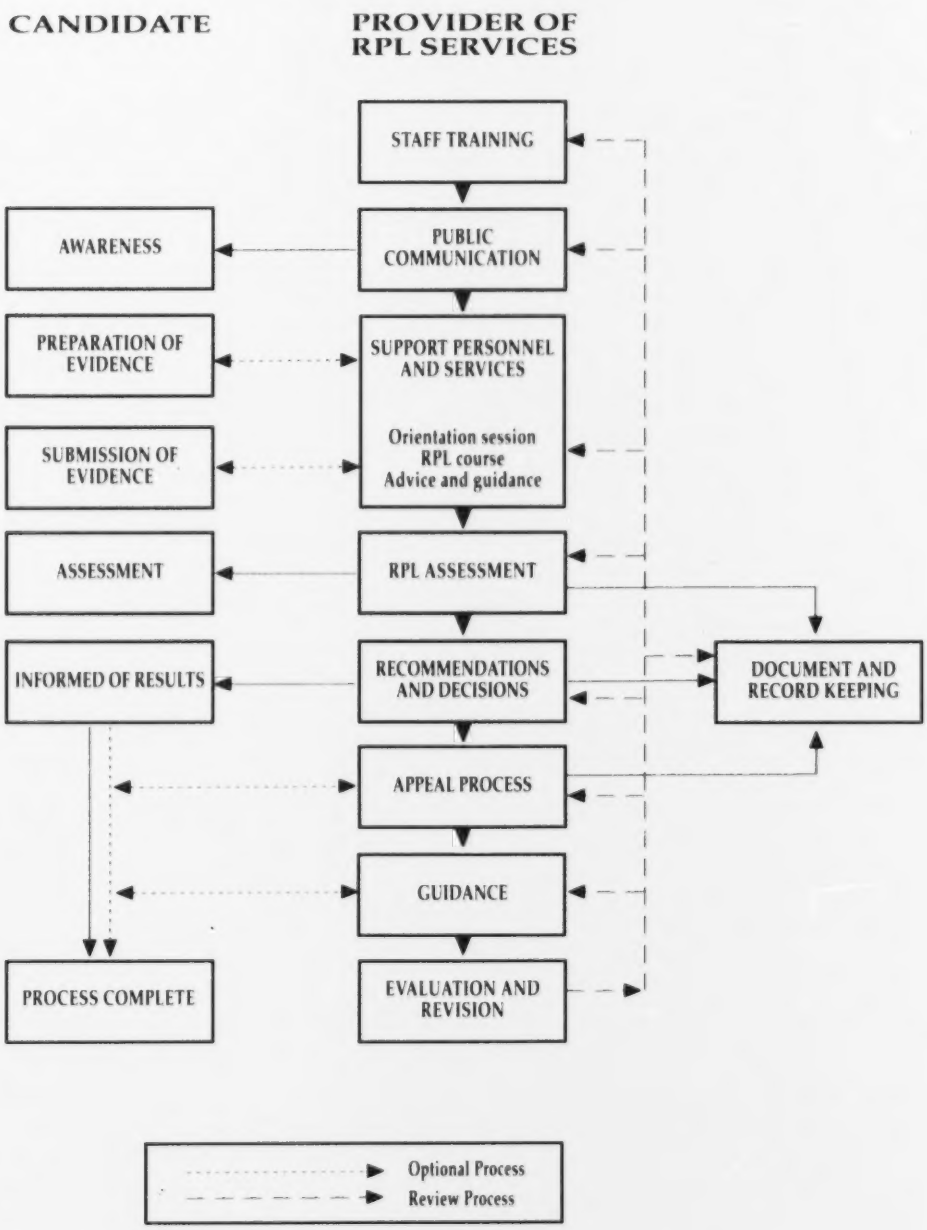
Moderation of assessment is a term covering activities that help to ensure that varied assessment procedures used for the same unit standards will produce consistent results.[10] Moderation is usually carried out through sampling activities. The requirements are specified by National Standards Bodies when unit standards are endorsed by them.

It is likely that many who are selected as RPL assessors will already be registered assessors or provider assessors. Quality checks will be made on all assessors through moderation.

10 *For further information refer to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority publications* Moderation of Assessment: An Introduction for National Standards Bodies *and* Designing a Moderation System

APPENDIX 1

A GOOD PRACTICE MODEL



The Good Practice Model is an amalgamation of successful New Zealand and international practice. The Qualifications Authority does not prescribe any one model in particular. The one shown is provided as a reference only. Further information and models can be found in the substantial literature available on RPL.

A variety of policies, models and procedures that promote access for all potential candidates will be developed by those implementing RPL. It is "important that the procedures themselves do not create unnecessary barriers".[11]

Candidates will go through the RPL process at their own pace and choose the services and providers that will best suit their needs. Candidates who have received RPL services from a non-accredited source should be referred to accredited providers or National Standards Bodies for the RPL assessment process and award of credit. Communication links between all those offering RPL services should be developed and maintained.

1 STAFF TRAINING

On-going training and development opportunities in RPL policy, principles and procedures should be available to all who have a part in implementing RPL. Positive and appropriate strategies to respond to all types of inquiries are needed.

Sensitivity to diverse cultures and abilities, gender and age of the candidates is essential. There must be sufficient numbers available to communicate in languages preferred by the candidates.

2 PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Appropriate information to promote public awareness about RPL is needed. However, it should not foster unrealistic expectations. Some questions that can be anticipated are:

"What is RPL?"

"How does RPL work?"

"Is RPL for me?"

"What do I have to do?"

"Where do I go?"

"How much will it cost?"

"What will I end up with?"

"How much of my time will it take?"

11 *Davis, 1990.*

Publicity should be jargon-free, be in languages appropriate to the audience, and stimulate people to seek further information. The information should be targeted to a wide audience using a range of effective communications strategies: leaflets, radio announcements, newspaper articles, posters, presentations to groups, etc.

Free orientation sessions, usually from a half to a whole day in length, have proved very successful overseas. They cover details about the RPL process using examples relevant to those in attendance, and opportunities for small group discussions or one-on-one counselling. The sessions can be held at convenient venues: in a marae-based setting, community centre, workplace, school or church.

The most important purpose of the orientation session is to help individuals make informed decisions about whether to apply for RPL assessment. A thorough, carefully organised orientation helps to ensure that those who decide to continue through the process are likely to succeed in receiving credit.

3 SUPPORT PERSONNEL AND SERVICES

PERSONNEL

The RPL Manager - Providers and National Standards Bodies are encouraged to identify a person to be responsible for co-ordinating and overseeing the administration of the RPL process from start to finish. Alternatively, several people who might share the tasks or services could be contracted.

Some of the tasks may include organising:

- staff training and development
- publicity
- orientation sessions
- advice and guidance
- RPL courses or workshops
- resources
- qualified assessors
- a review and award committee (page 18)
- an appeals process (page 19)
- evaluation and monitoring
- research

Facilitators - Advice, guidance and support should be available to candidates throughout the RPL process. The person in this role is referred to as the RPL facilitator and has the primary responsibility for advising and seeing the candidates through the process. S/he must have good counselling and communications skills, and the ability to gain the confidence of the candidate. This role may be delegated to more than one person.

To minimise costs, guidance and support can be effectively and efficiently provided in small groups and whanau.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Providers may seek accreditation to deliver the unit standard that focuses on preparing for an RPL assessment. A course based on this unit standard would offer potential candidates opportunities for peer support, the exchange of ideas and personal insights. It may provide instruction in or assistance with:

- self-assessment and analysis of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values;
- identifying and matching skills, knowledge, attitudes and values to the criteria of specific unit standards;
- gathering and preparing relevant evidence;
- identifying appropriate assessment methods;
- completing the application form;
- evaluating further training needs;
- educational or career planning.

Ideally, such courses will be available from providers on a continuing basis, with a variety of venues and flexible scheduling. The course should be delivered by a person with in-depth knowledge of and commitment to RPL principles. The instructor, who might be the RPL manager or facilitator, will be skilled in teaching, guidance, communications and career counselling.

If application forms are to be used, it may be desirable for more than one to be designed to accommodate suitable reading levels and appropriate languages. An alternative to a written application form is the establishment of a process that allows oral applications for those who do not have the ability or skills necessary to complete a written form. A translator should be provided where requested, as well as assistance for those who may need a reader, writer or sign language interpreter.

The relevance of each item of information requested on the application should be carefully considered. Sensitivity to confidentiality must be respected, and care taken that intrusion into social, cultural or personal details does not occur in either the application or assessment process.[12]

There are many other services to be considered for RPL candidates. These include peer support groups, creches, late and weekend library hours, access to work areas, computers and convenient guidance and counselling hours.

4 THE RPL ASSESSMENT

It is the task of the RPL assessor, in partnership with the candidate, to match the evidence of the relevant prior experience to the performance criteria of the specified unit standards for which credit is being sought. If insufficient evidence is submitted more may be requested.

It is important that the assessment be carried out in a comfortable physical, cultural and psychological environment. This environment should be conducive to participation and contribution by the candidate throughout the assessment process.

Variety in the methods of assessment is encouraged. Demonstration, attestation,[13] interview, or the evaluation of examples or projects are commonly used. The RPL assessment should be as rigorous as, but no more so, than formal or workplace assessment. RPL assessors must be able to apply "unique methodologies which are new and different from the norm".[14] For example, RPL assessors should:

- have an understanding and ability to carry out a *wide range* of assessment techniques;[15]
- have the ability to judge *diverse evidence*, fairly and accurately;
- have the ability to *draw inferences* based on evidence presented; and
- have the ability to "share control of the assessment process with the candidate".[16]

Assessors must also be effective communicators. Their selectors will judge whether they have sufficient depth and breadth of knowledge and skills in the content area(s) they will assess and of the outcomes of the unit standards. RPL assessors must also meet any additional criteria set by the National Standards Body or provider.

12 *Hopkins, 1992*

13 *Attestation is a method of assessment where the assessment decision is delegated by a provider accredited to implement RPL to a person or group recognised by the selector as having sufficient depth and breadth of knowledge, and respect, to execute a fair, valid and consistent assessment.*

14 *Ontario Council of Regents*

15 *Some examples are attestation, observation, and the evaluation of testimonials, certificates, documents and examples of work or projects.*

16 *Simosko, 1991. The RPL process should be treated as a partnership where decisions about the evidence to be used and methods of presentation, for example, are agreed upon between the candidate and assessor.*

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Small providers may not have a trained RPL assessor who is also qualified as a content expert. In this case, one person in each role may work together to carry out the RPL assessment. Alternatively, a provider may contract a qualified RPL assessor to work with a content expert according to the provider's procedures. An individual who wishes to carry out RPL assessments must either be registered by an NSB or employed by an accredited provider to ensure that all RPL assessors are operating within a quality management system.

International literature supports the separation of the roles of RPL facilitator and assessor. Where one person is both facilitator and assessor, a conflict of interest can result. This situation can be compared to a solicitor who prepares a client's evidence for court and also sits as the judge.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS

Once the candidate has been assessed against the criteria of one or more unit standards, it is common for the RPL assessor to make a recommendation regarding credit that is submitted to a review and award committee established by the NSB or provider. The committee has ultimate responsibility for credit awards. Processes should be put into place to deal with recommendations the committee deem to be unacceptable or where procedures were not followed.

After the committee finalises its decision, the candidate should be informed of the results as soon as possible. If appropriate, this should be done in person by the assessor where additional feedback can also be given. The final decision of the committee must be in writing to the candidate.

6 DOCUMENTATION AND RECORD KEEPING

Documentation of the assessment, recommendations, credit award and any appeal should be completed for each candidate.

A file should be kept by providers and National Standards Bodies for each candidate. It would hold all relevant information including any application form, the name of the assessor, the method(s) of assessment and rationale, and the assessor's notes describing the assessment process and recommendations. The file should also contain a description of (or actual) evidence submitted and a copy of the written results given to the candidate.

When credit is awarded for National Qualifications Framework unit standards, the Qualifications Authority must be notified of the results so that they can be entered on the candidate's Record of Learning. The Records of Learning will not indicate that credit was awarded through RPL.

7 APPEAL PROCESS

A process for appeals by candidates wishing to challenge the assessment results should be in place. Candidates should be informed of their right to appeal when they first enter the process.

8 GUIDANCE

After the assessment is complete and credit has been determined, guidance should be available from the provider, National Standards Body, or by referral to an organisation with the appropriate services. Assistance is often necessary for making decisions relating to:

- entering or continuing education and training;
- identifying training or education entry and exit points;
- identifying gap-filling courses; or
- exploring possible career paths.

9 EVALUATION AND REVISION

A plan for the continuous evaluation of RPL procedures is essential. Those who have been piloting RPL practices in New Zealand affirm that RPL systems evolve and are in constant need of modification. RPL systems that have been in place overseas for 20 years continue to be revised.

Processes should be established for data collection which will support evaluation and research. This may involve maintaining records of the numbers of candidates, recording all unit standards applied for and credit awarded, summarising representative case studies, and documenting the services and hours devoted exclusively to RPL implementation.

The sharing of policy statements, resources and research results can be done through written reports, articles in newsletters and journals, and presentations at conferences and association meetings. This is one way that New Zealand can contribute to national and international literature.

APPENDIX 2

PERSONAL PROFILES OF CANDIDATES

These personal profiles of individuals who have applied for credit for their prior learning serve as examples of potential RPL candidates. Emphasis is placed on their qualifications and prior experience, rather than on the results of their assessments. The outcomes of assessments have little meaning without much more detailed information.

CANDIDATE: MR A

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

Mr A spent seven years in the British Merchant Navy during which time he completed two certificates. Since immigrating to New Zealand, he has been a First Mate on a factory trawler. Some of his responsibilities include ship stability, dry dock preparation and maintenance supervision, navigation to and from fishing grounds, maintenance of electronic equipment and fishing aids, and crew management.

EVIDENCE:

Certificates, testimonial letters, support from employer

CREDIT REQUESTED:

Towards the Watchkeeper, Second Mate, First Mate and Master/ Foreign-Going Ship certificates

CANDIDATE: MRS B

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

Mrs B has worked as a clerical assistant, postie, barperson and caterer. She has undertaken one year of teacher training, has had training in the Post Office, and trained other staff. Mrs B has operated her own lawn mowing and gardening contract business, and is a wife and mother who has been involved in volunteer work in kindergartens and schools.

EVIDENCE:

Letters from employers. She requested that an interview be organised in which she could be questioned about her relevant skills, knowledge, attitudes and values.

CREDIT REQUESTED:

Toward chef's qualification

CANDIDATE: MRS C

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

Mrs C qualified for university entrance but chose to stay with her iwi and work amongst her people and with Maori children by completing the Kohanga Reo kaiako training. After working in the Kohanga Reo for three years, she volunteered at her local primary school and was offered a paid position as a teacher's aide which she has held for five years. During this time she has taught classes for many of the teachers in Te Reo, Maori music and arts and crafts.

EVIDENCE:

Lesson plans in Te Reo, music, arts and crafts, testimonials from the principal and teachers, Kohanga Reo, and iwi; documentation of the Kohanga Reo kaiako training; examples of items the children have made in her classes, and a video tape of groups of children (including many Pakeha) singing and performing Maori songs

CREDIT REQUESTED:

Toward a primary teaching diploma

CANDIDATE: MR D

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

Mr D is a new immigrant who was a successful artist in his home country. Although he has no qualifications, he spent time in schools running seminars for teachers of art education in both primary and secondary schools. He has volunteered his time in New Zealand schools running similar seminars. Mr D has become interested in Maori and Pacific Island art and design, and has visited museums, marae and workshops to learn more.

EVIDENCE:

Testimonial letters of his teaching and interpersonal skills from principals and teachers from his home country and New Zealand; a portfolio of his art work which includes a variety of methods and mixed media; secondary school completion certificate

CREDIT REQUESTED:

Towards a primary teaching diploma

CANDIDATE: MS E

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

Ms E has extensive experience working with intellectually handicapped children in the United Kingdom. She has a certificate in Psychopathic Training, which includes applied behavioural analysis and theories of human development and learning. Ms E has one year of teaching experience in London as a special school teacher and holds a certificate of proficiency in the training of the intellectually handicapped. She has also worked as a psychopathic assistant and is currently employed as a teacher's aide in a school for special needs students.

EVIDENCE:

Certificates; a paper she wrote on psychopaedics; letters from the schools in London where she taught and from her supervisor when she worked as a psychopathic assistant giving details of her work responsibilities. She was observed by her assessor in several situations in her position as teacher's aide.

CREDIT REQUESTED:

Towards a qualification in teaching children with special needs

CANDIDATE: MR F

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

Upon leaving school, Mr F spent much of his time doing odd jobs until training programmes, particularly carving/whakairo, caught and held his interest. He has been taught by a Master carver and worked with an assortment of small carving projects, including work on a meeting house. His Access courses included personal development, te reo Maori and tikanga.

EVIDENCE:

Attestation by his tutor/iwi/and provider; collation of his work samples presented to Whakaruruhau Whakairo (advisory group for carving) representatives at a formal hui

CREDIT REQUESTED:

Towards a national certificate whakairo

CANDIDATE: MISS G

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

Since leaving school at 15, Miss G has worked in a variety of retail outlets as a salesperson and has had responsibility for bookkeeping. She is currently a supervisor in the fabrics department of a large store, a position she has held for 2 years.

EVIDENCE:

A collection of documentation for her supervisory work, record keeping, stock control, balance sheets, costings, ledgers, computer printouts and filing systems; designs and photographs of displays she created; a CV with job descriptions and references from employers; vocational certificates in typing, word processing, spread sheets; articles she wrote as a volunteer for a community newspaper; and minutes she took as secretary

CREDIT REQUESTED:

Towards a qualification in business management

CANDIDATE: MR H

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

Mr H lost his job as an assembly worker in a factory assembling washing machines four years ago where he had worked for twelve years. Interested in cars since he was a teenager, he has earned a small income for three years by repairing friends' cars and helping out at a local repair shop. While employed at the factory Mr H participated in workplace training and took night classes at the polytechnic in electrical and mechanical engineering.

EVIDENCE:

A referral by the supervisor of a major automotive repair business; copies of the detailed repair work he had done for the local repair shop and a letter of reference; testimonials from his customers; a job description of his factory work and certificates from workplace training and evening classes. The assessor spent a day with him in the shop as he worked on diagnosing and repairing two vehicles.

CREDIT REQUESTED:

Towards a qualification in automotive maintenance and repair

APPENDIX 3

POLICY OF THE BOARD OF THE NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY ON THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

The Board of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority affirmed, in its decisions of 24 September 1991, support for the formal Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

On 20 April 1993 the following policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning was approved. The policy statements are expanded upon in this booklet.

1 The Recognition of Prior Learning is a descriptive term used by the Qualifications Authority in conjunction with Credit Transfer to encompass *the recognition of competency already achieved.*

2 The Qualifications Authority definition of the Recognition of Prior Learning is:

A process of awarding credit for unit standards in the National Qualifications Framework where the outcomes have been achieved outside the Framework.

3 Providers and National Standards Bodies must provide evidence of commitment to the principles of the Recognition of Prior Learning.

4 Providers can apply to have their accreditation extended to include the Recognition of Prior Learning when their applications demonstrate appropriate procedures.

5 National Standards Bodies can apply to have their accreditation extended to register Recognition of Prior Learning assessors when their applications demonstrate appropriate procedures.

6 Providers and National Standards Bodies must implement Recognition of Prior Learning policies that ensure assessors:

a) have demonstrated the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values embodied in the relevant RPL unit standards; and

b) have relevant experience specific to the levels and content area(s) they will assess.

Providers' and National Standards Bodies' policies must indicate that they are working towards a comprehensive RPL management system employing skilled facilitators.

7 Prior learning can be assessed by:

a) assessors registered by National Standards Bodies, against unit standards endorsed by them; and

b) provider assessors, against the unit standards the provider is accredited to offer.

8 The Recognition of Prior Learning assessment will be moderated, but flexibility in methods of assessment beyond that allowed for in the selected external moderation option must be accommodated.

9 Providers and National Standards Bodies must accept credit acquired by the Recognition of Prior Learning. Credit for unit standards gained through the Recognition of Prior Learning will be identical to that gained through the approved National Qualifications Framework moderation option.

10 Credit for unit standards may be awarded by the Recognition of Prior Learning:

a) that is specific to a programme or qualification;

b) that is not specific to a programme or qualification; and

c) for a *complete* qualification.

11 Individuals' Records of Learning will not specify that unit standards have been completed through the Recognition of Prior Learning. Such unit standards will have the same standing for purposes of credit accumulation and transfer as unit standards completed through any other form of assessment.

APPENDIX 4

GLOSSARY

- ACCREDITATION (of national standards bodies) - a process for ensuring that national standards bodies have the capability, including quality management systems, to register assessors (see also General Accreditation, Group Accreditation and Unit Accreditation).
- ACCREDITATION (of providers) - a process for ensuring that providers have the capability, including management of quality, to deliver and assess unit standards.
- ADVISORY GROUP - a group of advisers appointed by the Qualifications Authority to act in lieu of a national standards body, where no such body exists in an area of learning.
- ASSESSMENT - a process of collecting and interpreting evidence of competence or achievement.
- ASSESSOR - see REGISTERED ASSESSOR
- AUDIT - see QUALITY AUDIT
- ATTESTATION - a method of assessment where the assessment decision is delegated by a provider accredited to implement RPL to a person or group recognised by the selector as having sufficient depth and breadth of knowledge, and respect, to execute a fair, valid and consistent assessment.
- CANDIDATE - a person who applies for the Recognition of Prior Learning.
- CERTIFICATE - documentary evidence that a qualification has been awarded.
- CREDIT - a value assigned to a unit standard that reflects the relative time and effort required to achieve its outcomes.
- CREDIT TRANSFER - a process of transferring credits between programmes that lead to a nationally registered qualification.
- DELIVERY - teaching and learning approaches, context and content, resources, and assessment tasks.
- DOMAIN - a term describing a specific area of learning at unit standard level, defined in the *Index of Unit Standards and National Qualifications*
- ELEMENT - the learning that must be demonstrated for successful completion of a unit standard.
- FIELD - a term describing a broad area of learning, corresponding to an *ISCED* field and defined in the *Index of Unit Standards and National Qualifications* (see also SUB-FIELD and DOMAIN)
- GENERAL ACCREDITATION - accreditation of a provider to offer programmes based on all National Certificate and National Diploma unit standards up to level 7 of the Framework.

- GROUP ACCREDITATION - accreditation of a provider to offer programmes based on a number of unit standards in a specified field, sub-field or domain up to a specified level.
- INDEX OF UNIT STANDARDS AND NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS - a database that defines fields, sub-fields and domains, used for naming qualifications and unit standards, and in associating unit standards for provider accreditation.
- INDUSTRY TRAINING ORGANISATION - a body recognised by the Education and Training Support Agency as the national standards body and training co-ordinator for its industry sector.
- LEVELS - the eight levels of the National Qualifications Framework.
- MODERATION OF ASSESSMENT - a process for ensuring the consistency of assessment with the required standard.
- NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK - collectively, all nationally registered qualifications and the nationally registered unit standards from which they are derived. Implicit is a defined and logical relationship between them.
- NATIONAL STANDARDS BODIES - represent all major user groups connected with a field, sub-field or domain (for example, health sciences) and have responsibility for the development, evaluation, endorsement and maintenance of all unit standards and qualifications in that category. Used as a generic term for National Standards Bodies, Industry Training Organisations, whakaruruhau and Qualifications Authority advisory groups.
- PERFORMANCE CRITERIA - statements of the standard against which the attainment of elements or outcomes is assessed.
- PROVIDER - an individual or organisation providing education or training.
- PROVIDER ASSESSOR - an individual employed by an accredited provider (including teachers, tutors, trainers, kaiako) who carries out assessment within a provider's quality management system.
- QUALIFICATION - a named combination of unit standards that has been endorsed by a national standards body and registered by the Qualifications Authority.
- QUALITY AUDIT - a process for ensuring the effectiveness of a provider's or national standards body's overall systems for the management of quality; a function of the Authority.
- QUALITY MANAGEMENT - a structure and process of improvement through self-evaluation, implemented by a provider or national standards body to ensure that standards required by the Authority are met and maintained; a prerequisite for accreditation.
- RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING - a process of awarding credit for unit standards in the National Qualifications Framework where the learning outcomes have been acquired outside the Framework.

- RECORD OF LEARNING - a document that contains details of credits awarded to an individual for the completion of unit standards and national qualifications.
- REGISTERED ASSESSOR - an assessor appointed by a national standards body to conduct assessments of individuals against unit standards.
- REGISTRATION OF PRIVATE TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS - a process for ensuring that a private training establishment has the capability to provide a sound and stable learning environment.
- REGISTRATION OF UNIT STANDARDS AND QUALIFICATIONS - a process for ensuring that unit standards and qualifications have been evaluated and endorsed by national standards bodies as representing an acceptable and exclusive national standard, and so registered with the Authority.
- STANDARDS - nationally registered statements of education and training outcomes and their associated performance criteria. See also UNIT STANDARD.
- STANDARDS-BASED ASSESSMENT - a process of collecting and interpreting evidence of competence or achievement which are measured in terms of the elements and performance criteria specified within unit standards.
- SUB-FIELD - a term describing a specific area of education or training at qualification level, corresponding to an ISCED sub-field and defined in the *Index of Unit Standards and National Qualifications*
- UNIT - see UNIT STANDARD
- UNIT ACCREDITATION - accreditation of a provider to offer a specific unit standard or unit standards.
- UNIT STANDARD - a nationally registered set of element or outcome statements and their associated performance criteria, with administrative information.
- USER GROUP - all those who derive direct or indirect benefit from a qualification and its component unit standards; generally includes learners, qualified individuals, professional associations, employees and employers, all of whom may be represented, along with providers, in national standards bodies.
- WHAKARURUHAU - a national standards body representing the Maori interest in the development of unit standards and national qualifications, in both Maori-specific areas and the total National Qualifications Framework.

APPENDIX 5

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Benton, Nena (1991). *Recognition of Prior Learning: From Hegemony to Symphony*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services.

This report was prepared for the Maori Caucus of the New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services. It gives a rationale for RPL and discusses issues and applications in the Maori context. An international overview and an assessment model are presented.

Benton, Richard, et al (1993). *Database of Research and Information on the Recognition, Assessment and Accreditation of Prior Learning: The Project Database*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

This on-line database includes information on projects that have been initiated within New Zealand.

Benton, Nena; Swindells, James; Benton, Richard and Chrisp, Tipene (1993). *Annotated Bibliography of Materials on the Assessment, Recognition and Accreditation of Prior Learning: On-Line Electronic Database, Te Wahapu*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

This is an on-line database of materials that is useful in the New Zealand context.

Broadmeadows College of TAFE. *National RPL Review*. Broadmeadows, Australia: Broadmeadows College of TAFE.

This newsletter has articles on current activities in industry and institutions in the state of Victoria, Australia.

Davis, Sally (1990). *The Recognition of Prior Learning: Ford/TAFE Articulation Project Principal Report*. Broadmeadows, Australia: Broadmeadows College of TAFE.

This report has six sections: RPL and the current training environment, training support for implementation, description of the model, applications of the model, state training system issues, and history of the project.

Evans, N. (1992). *Experiential Learning, Its Assessment and Accreditation*. London: Routledge.

Evans explores in detail the history of the experiential learning movement in the UK and the ways in which RPL is bejng practised in post-compulsory education.

Gunn, C. and McDougall, J. (1992). *Recognising Prior Learning: Guidelines in Policy Development*. Nelson: Nelson Polytechnic and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

Prepared by Nelson Polytechnic for NZQA, this report recommends procedures for New Zealand polytechnics that will lead to awarding credit by RPL. A comprehensive, flexible model is presented. This document is available from Nelson Polytechnic.

Harré Hindmarsh, J. et al (1992) *Recognition of Prior Learning: An Exploratory Study in a New Zealand University*. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

The emphasis of this study is placed on practices at Victoria University. The paper addresses issues of educational philosophy for under-represented groups. It gives an overview of current practices, suggests RPL principle guidelines, and outlines changes required for a comprehensive RPL system in the university. The document can be purchased from Victoria University.

Hopkins, John (1992). *Recognition of Prior Learning. A Pilot Study: Certificate in Community and Social Work: Fieldwork Placement*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services.

The Waikato Polytechnic offers a part-time Certificate in Community and Social Work course. An RPL pilot project was designed and 16 women submitted applications for fieldwork credit. The process included individual and group guidance, and assessment interviews. This booklet is available for $12.00 from NZCETSS, Private Bag 21, Wellington

Lamdin, Lois (1992). *Earn College Credit for What You Know*. 2nd ed. Chicago: The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning.

This book has a section on portfolio-assisted assessment and includes many examples of adults who have successfully returned to tertiary studies to earn credit towards a degree.

New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services (1991). *Education and Training in the Social Services: Procedures for Accreditation and Course Approval*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services.

A section on "Accreditation of Prior Learning Achievement" gives descriptions, guidelines and a model that are all useful for developing RPL implementation procedures.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority (1993). *Recognition of Prior learning and the National Qualifications Framework: Conference Papers.* Wellington: New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

This is a collection of the papers presented at the RPL conference sponsored by the Authority in April 1993. It is available for purchase for $20 from The Sales Officer, NZQA, PO Box 160, Wellington.

Ontario Council of Regents' Prior Learning Assessment Advisory Committee (1992). *Prior Learning Assessment: Enhancing the Access of Adult Learners to Ontario's Colleges.* Ontario, Canada: Ontario Council of Regents for Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology.

This report is the result of a request by the Minister of Colleges and Universities for the Council of Regents to advise on the development and implementation of a system of prior learning assessment for Ontario's colleges. It is a thorough, realistic, far-reaching, timely and revealing document concluding with 33 recommendations.

Sheehan, D. (1992). *Recognition of Prior Learning Trial: Report to NZQA.* Christchurch: Christchurch College of Education and the the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

The author presents a model based on two trial projects - one in a polytechnic, the other in a college of education. This is a case study approach, with emphasis on group activities. This report is available from the Christchurch College of Education.

Simosko, S. (1991). *APL: A Practical Guide for Professionals.* London: Kogan Page Ltd.

An excellent book, full of practical advice. It is based on the author's wide-ranging experiences.

Simosko, S. (1992). *Get Qualifications for What You Know and Can Do: A Personal Guide to APL.* London: Kogan Page Ltd.

Some of the subjects covered in this book include: Is RPL for you? Identifying Your Strengths, Developing Your Evidence, and the Assessment Process. Although written for the RPL candidate, it is also recommended for education and training providers.

Stratton, Nick (1990). *APL Handbook.* London: City and Guilds of London Institute.

The author places emphasis on the link between RPL, national vocational qualifications and industry.

Vocational Education, Employment and Training Advisory Committee (1993). *Arrangements for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Australia.* Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training.

In 1992, Australian Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training signed an agreement that committed them to implementing RPL. This document presents five key principles and six main process features, and gives details of pilot schemes and best practice.

Whitaker, Urban (1989). *Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles, and Procedures.* Pennsylvania: Council for Adult and Experiential Learning.

This book expands on the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning standards of APL. CAEL is "a non-profit association of United States colleges, universities, organisations, educators and other individuals dedicated to the expansion of lifelong learning opportunities for adults and the advancement of experiential learning and its assessment."

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